

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EUR/SOV:RWFARRAND:REH:RAH
APPROVED BY EUR:WHLUERS

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R 120014Z AUG 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 204348

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: BGEN, UR, US

SUBJECT: WHITNEY/PIPER CASE

REF: MOSCOW 18896

1. HAL PIPER AND HENRY TREWHITT OF "BALTIMORE SUN" CALLED ON DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LUERS IN DEPARTMENT AUG 9. PIPER, WHO HAD BEEN ON LEAVE IN US, SAID HE WAS SOMEWHAT OUT OF TOUCH WITH HIS CASE AND ASKED FOR AN UP-DATE ON DEPARTMENT'S VIEW OF MATTER. LUERS BROUGHT PIPER UP-TO-DATE ON CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS DRAWING ON EMBASSY'S REPORTING.

2. TO QUESTION ON WHAT MIGHT BE DONE, LUERS WONDERED WHETHER BALTIMORE SUN AND NEW YORK TIMES MIGHT WISH TO ENLIST SUPPORT OF SOME PRIMINENT NON-GOVERNMENTAL AMERICAN TO SEND A MESSAGE TO A HIGH LEVEL SOVIET TO EXPLAIN HOW EASY IT WOULD BE TO CLEAR UP THIS CASE AND HOW NEGATIVE
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THE REACTION WILL BE IN THE U.S. OF CONTINUING HARRASSMENT.

3. PIPER SAID THAT HE FELT IN NO PERSONAL DANGER RETURNING TO USSR NEXT WEEK. BUT, IN HIS VIEW, SOVIETS MIGHT WELL EXPEL HIM AND WHITNEY RATHER THAN PREFER CRIMINAL CHARGES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE WITH COURT ORDER TO RETRACT THEIR ARTICLES ON GAMSAKHURDIA CONFESSION AND TRIAL. PIPER

OBSERVED THAT SOVIETS MAY FEEL PUSHED TO EXPULSION MEASURE
BY FACT THAT WESTERN JOURNALIST CORPS IN MOSCOW SEEMS NOT
TO HAVE GOTTEN PROBABLY INTENDED MESSAGE BY SOVIETS TO
RESTRICT JOURNALISTIC ACTIVITIES IN MOSCOW.

4. THE REMAINDER OF AN HOUR DISCUSSION WAS ABOUT US-SOVIET
RELATIONS AND INTERNAL SOVIET DEVELOPMENTS. CHRISTOPHER

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